

REMARKS

With respect to the rejection of claim 4 under 35 USC § 112, Applicant has cancelled claim 4, so this rejection is moot.

With respect to the rejections under 35 USC § 102 based on US 2003/0198325 A1 (Bayne), Applicant submits that Bayne fails to teach or suggest the specific combination of independent claim 21. For example, Bayne fails to teach or suggest generating a query from an inmate platform to an external line information database (LIDB) platform to determine a blocking status signal to determine a status of the called party. The Examiner agrees and states that Bayne fails to teach the possibility of a called party setting up a screen to avoid or block collect calls (Office Action, p. 5).

To overcome this deficiency in Bayne, the Office Action refers to U.S. Patent No. 6,430,274 ("Winstead"). However, Winstead teaches away from the invention of claim 21. Winstead teaches that line information database (LIDB) platforms are very expensive and their use should be reduced or eliminated. For example, Winstead teaches "While LIDBs reduce losses associated with alternative billing schemes, they come with a heavy price. For every validation query, regardless of whether authorization is granted, the phone company is charged a query fee. For some telephone companies these query fees can run into the tens of millions of dollars per month. These costs are generally passed on to consumers in the form of higher rates for service." (Winstead, col. 2, lines 34-42) "As a result, charges for unnecessary LIDB queries are generally passed on to the paying customer of the telephone companies in the form of higher rates. A method and system is desired, therefore, which will substantially reduce or eliminate unnecessary database queries related to alternative billing schemes and collect call schemes in particular." (Winstead, col. 3, lines 64-67; col. 4, lines 1-4).

In addition, Winstead fails to teach or suggest processing a blocking status signal. More specifically, Winstead fails to teach or suggest the claimed steps of processing the blocking status signal and when the status blocking signal indicates a blocked condition, using the inmate platform to prompt the called party to determine whether charges for the collect call are accepted and, when the charges are accepted by the called party, to further receive third party billing

information to provide for payment of the accepted charges. Further, Winstead fails to teach or suggest connecting the call from the inmate facility to the called party when the charges for the collect call are accepted by the called party and when the third party billing information is validated for payment of the accepted charges. In contrast to this feature of claim 21, Winstead teaches to terminate the call if the LIDB determines that the call is blocked. Winstead states: "Likewise, if the LIDB does not authorize the call at step 70, the call terminates at step 140." (Winstead, col. 3, lines 11-13).

Thus, in contrast to Winstead, claim 21 is directed to performing actions after the LIDB signal indicates a blocked condition, including prompting the called party to determine whether charges for the collect call are accepted and when the charges are accepted by the called party to further receive third party billing information to provide for payment of the accepted charges and to connect the call from the inmate facility to the called party when the third party billing information is validated for payment of the accepted charges. In contrast to claim 21, Winstead teaches that calls are terminated after the LIDB indicates a blocked condition. Thus, for this additional reason, Winstead teaches away from the invention of claim 21. Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, claim 21 is allowable over all of the cited references, including Bayne and Winstead.

With respect to the rejections under 35 USC § 102 based on US 2003/0198325 A1 (Bayne), Applicant submits that Bayne fails to teach or suggest the specific combination of independent claim 30. For example, Bayne fails to teach or suggest a query generation element to generate a query from an inmate platform to a line information database (LIDB) platform to determine a blocking status signal for the dialed number to determine a status of the called destination. The Examiner agrees and states that Bayne fails to teach the possibility of a called party setting up a screen to avoid or block collect calls (Office Action, p. 5).

To overcome this deficiency in Bayne, the Office Action refers to U.S. Patent No. 6,430,274 ("Winstead"). However, Winstead teaches away from the invention of claim 30. As referenced above, Winstead teaches that line information database (LIDB) platforms are very expensive and their use should be reduced or eliminated.

In addition, Winstead fails to teach or suggest a processor to process a blocking status signal. More specifically, Winstead fails to teach or suggest a processor to process the blocking status signal such that when the status blocking signal indicates a blocked condition, an inmate platform prompts the called destination to determine whether charges for the collect call are accepted, and when the charges are accepted by the called party, the inmate platform receives third party billing information to provide for payment of the accepted charges. Further, Winstead fails to teach or suggest connecting the call from the inmate facility to the called destination when the charges for the collect call are accepted and when the third party billing information is validated for payment of the accepted charges. In contrast to claim 30, Winstead teaches to terminate the call if the LIDB determines that the call is blocked. Winstead states: "Likewise, if the LIDB does not authorize the call at step 70, the call terminates at step 140." (Winstead, col. 3, lines 11-13).

Thus, in contrast to Winstead, claim 30 is directed to a processor that performs actions after the LIDB signal indicates a blocked condition, including prompting the called destination to determine whether charges for the collect call are accepted and when the charges are accepted to receive third party billing information to provide for payment of the accepted charges and to connect the call from the inmate facility to the called party when the third party billing information is validated. Thus, for this additional reason, Winstead teaches away from the invention of claim 30. Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, claim 30 is allowable over all of the cited references, including Bayne and Winstead.

Since each of the independent claims is allowable, each of the dependent claims is likewise allowable. In addition, the dependent claims include further features not found in the cited references. For example, none of the cited references teach or suggest that when the charges for the collect call are not approved that the operator services platform notifies the called party as to one or more reasons why the results of the billing approval process are negative (see claims 26 and 35) or that when the blocking status signal indicates a blocked condition in response to selective blocking having been requested by the called party that the collect call is connected for communication after the called party provides validated credit card information in response to receiving the collect call request from the inmate facility (see claims 29 and 38). Thus, all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims. If, for any reason, the Office is unable to allow the Application on the next Office Action, and believes a telephone interview would be helpful, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney or agent.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-2469.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date


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